

THE IALH UPDATE

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Older Adult Cancer Survivors: Income, Physical Changes and Help-Seeking



Photo by Michelle Leman, Pexels.com

“Globally, the number of older adults surviving cancer is anticipated to grow rapidly over the next decades. Cancer and its treatment can leave survivors with a myriad of challenges including physical changes which impact independence and quality of life.”

IALH Research Fellow Lorelei Newton (Nursing) and colleagues in Alberta, New Brunswick and Ontario recently published a paper examining the relationship between income and concerns about physical changes experienced by older adult cancer survivors. Findings were based on secondary analysis of data from the *Experiences of Cancer Patients in Transition Survey*. This national survey of community-dwelling cancer survivors explored their experiences with survivorship care one to three years after cancer treatment. A total of 7975 individuals, 65 years of age and older, responded to the survey. Of these, 5891 (73.9%) provided information regarding annual household income. Of those reporting household income, approximately 20% reported an income of less than \$25,000 per year.

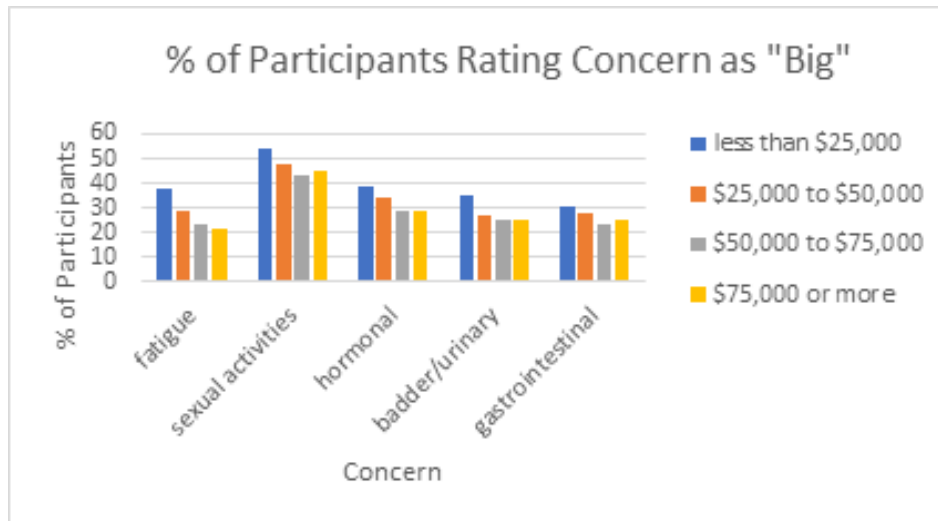
Over 90% of individuals who provided information regarding household income provided insights into the impact of physical changes following cancer treatment, concerns about the changes, and whether they sought assistance for their concerns.

The most frequently reported physical challenge following treatment was fatigue/tiredness. Other frequently reported challenges included changes in sexual activities, bladder/urinary problems, changes in concentration/memory, nerve problems, and gastrointestinal problems.

Compared to individuals in higher income groups, individuals in lower income groups reported higher percentages of concerns overall. In addition, they were more likely to rate changes in fatigue, sexual activities, and hormonal levels as well as bladder/urinary and gastrointestinal problems as “big concerns” compared to individuals in higher income groups.

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Individuals in the lowest income group (less than \$25,000 per year) were also significantly more likely than those in the highest income group (\$75,000 or more per year) to seek help for fatigue/tiredness, changes in concentration or memory, nerve problems, gastrointestinal problems, and chronic or long-term pain.

Between 18% and 56% of participants, across all income levels, reported difficulty finding assistance

for their concerns. The researchers noted that “This raises questions about accessibility and availability of interventions, services, and programs for older survivors of cancer...healthcare systems should ensure survivors across all income levels know about, and have access to...programs, information and resources about physical changes they could experience and what can be done to reduce the challenges.”

To read the full article, go to <https://bmcgeriatr.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12877-023-03887-1>

Resources

Masterminds 2023

Last month, the UVic Retirees Association and IALH presented the 2023 Masterminds Lecture Series. We would like to thank our wonderful speakers for sharing their research with us. Recordings from Masterminds 2023 are now available to watch on [IALH's YouTube channel](#).

Exercise IS Medicine: A Broad-Spectrum Prescription for All

Speaker: Kathy Gaul, PhD, Professor Emeritus, School of Exercise, Physical, and Health Education

Description: There is a prescription that could prevent many chronic diseases and help treat those who are managing and/or recovering from illness. If a single medicine was available that could do all that, plus enhance cancer treatment effectiveness, improve mental health, and had unlimited refills, would you not want to take it? Its impact is broad and the evidence strong. This “medicine” is Exercise!

Physical Literacy Empowered By Environment

Speaker: Patti-Jean (PJ) Naylor, PhD, Professor Emeritus of the School of Exercise, Physical, and Health Education

Description: What is physical literacy, and why is it important across the lifespan? Dr. Naylor introduces the concept of physical literacy, highlights ideas for physical literacy supportive environments in our communities and discusses the implications of physical literacy for individuals.

Flipping Stigma on Its Ear Toolkit

A diagnosis of dementia can increase a person’s sense of vulnerability. In addition to being faced with challenging cognitive changes, those with dementia may face stigma and discrimination that can make the experience worse. *The Flipping Stigma on Its Ear Toolkit* was designed by people with dementia to help others – such as others with dementia, those who support them, and researchers – to address the challenges of stigma and discrimination. For more information, go to <https://www.flippingstigma.com/>

Mental Health: Is There an App for That?

Approximately 50% of individuals over the age of 40 have, or have had, a mental illness. There are over 10,000 mental health and wellness apps now available. In this webinar, psychiatrist Dr. Anthony Levinson discusses key mental health apps and online resources health professionals recommend to help people self-manage several mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance use issues. He also describes the potential benefits and possible harms posed by using online resources.

For more information, go to

<https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/blog/detail/videos/2023/04/05/mental-health-is-there-an-app-for-that>

Research Opportunities

Dementia Friendly Communities: Seeking Input from People with Lived Experience of Dementia or Memory Impairment Who Live Alone

In collaboration with colleagues at the University of Victoria and UBC, IALH Research Fellow Mariko Sakamoto (Nursing) is conducting a project entitled *Dementia Friendly Communities: Including the Perspectives and Experiences of People with Dementia Who Live Alone*. This is a community-based action research project which will engage directly with people with dementia who live alone. The goals of the project are to: a) develop an in-depth understanding of the community-related needs of people with dementia who live alone; and b) explain and demonstrate how communities can be dementia friendly and support the social inclusion and well being of individuals with dementia living alone. For more information or to participate, contact Dr. Sakamoto at msakamoto@uvic.ca or by phone at 604-727-6099.

Development of a Wearable Sensor for Individuals with Gait Disorders

Approximately 13.6% of Canadians 20 years of age and older live with osteoarthritis. Arthritis in lower extremities, particularly osteoarthritis, can cause pain, stiffness and weakness which can change the way people walk (also referred to as gait). Gait disorders caused by arthritis, such as limps or shuffling, can cause strain and pain in other joints and weakness in muscles around the hip and knee can affect balance. This, in turn, can increase the risk of injuries and falls and reduce mobility and quality of life.

IALH Research Fellow Marianne Black (Mechanical Engineering), and a team of undergraduate students in a 4th year biomedical engineering class are looking for individuals 50 years of age and older with knee pain (patient advisors) to assist them in designing a wearable foot sensor that can correct for gait disorders. It is anticipated that the sensor will be capable of detecting abnormal gait patterns and providing real-time feedback to correct them. Patient advisors will be asked to provide some user-centered design feedback through two surveys. The first survey will contain questions to inform initial project design. The second will seek opinions on the prototype design. Each survey will take approximately 30 to 60 minutes to complete. For more information or to participate, contact Dr. Black at marianneblack@uvic.ca or by phone at 250-853-3177.

Development of Health Questionnaires

IALH Associate Member, Dr. Richard Sawatsky, a Professor in Nursing at Trinity Western University is seeking Canadians aged 18 years and older to participate in an anonymous survey as part of a research study that will develop measurement tools for people's health.

The goal of the study is to create health questionnaires that are relatively short, accurate, and customized to reflect each person's unique lived experiences, culture and social situation. To do this, it is important to first understand how people with diverse experiences and backgrounds answer the same questions. From this, an understanding of which questions are most relevant to each person is obtained. Your participation will help ensure a diverse response. For more information and to participate, go to <https://cambianservices.com/widget/organizations/84e52758-3cc6-4c68-9c9a-ac374bb03d09/questionnaireWidget/8fefbc97-9ef9-465e-bfc6-a233a65020a6>.

Improving Diagram Accessibility for People with Visual impairments

Yichun Zhao is a graduate student working with IALH Research Fellow Sowmya Somanath (Computer Science) and Associate Professor Miguel Nacenta (Computer Science). Together, they are conducting research to evaluate an interactive system designed to improve diagram accessibility for people with vision loss.

To be eligible, individuals must:

- Consider themselves to be blind, visually impaired, or partially sighted;
- Rely on the auditory channel, or auditory combined with other sensory channels to access information from a computer;
- Have experience using touch-screen devices;
- Be older than 18 years of age;
- Reside in Victoria, Vancouver, Fraser Valley, or Kelowna BC, Canada.

More information can be found at <https://chunthebear.github.io/diagram-accessibility-user-study-recruitment/>.

Upcoming Events

Move for Neurogenesis

Sundays, June 4 to August 27, 9:00 to 10:00 am, Elk Lake

Brain Changes Initiative is hosting a 12-week Move for Neurogenesis campaign to promote the benefits of exercise on brain health. Registration is \$30 for the whole program. All of the funds raised will go towards supporting neuroscience research. For more information, go to www.brainchanges.org.

CRC Talks: Employment and Family Caregiving in Palliative Care

Wednesday, June 7, 1:30 - 2:30 pm (PDT)

This talk will explore some of the financial impacts of end of life caregiving, in particular focusing on employment and the challenges of providing informal care to someone approaching the end of life whilst remaining in paid work. The role of government policy and employment legislation will also be considered, reflecting on international evidence including from the UK and Canada.

About the speaker:

Dr. Clare Gardiner is a Professor of Palliative Care at the Health Sciences School at the University of Sheffield, UK. She is particularly interested in research concerning economic aspects of palliative care, and the costs of family caregiving and impacts on employment.

To join the meeting, visit <https://uvic.zoom.us/j/87488804312>.

Public Pharmacare Now

Sunday, June 11, 7:00-9:00 pm, Dave Dunnet Community Theatre, Oak Bay High School, 2121 Cadboro Bay Road

Over 3.4 million Canadians cannot afford their medications and millions more are struggling with high out-of-pocket costs. A public, single-payer drug insurance plan that covers all Canadians could change this. The Council of Canadians is hosting a Townhall to discuss Pharmacare, a proposed national drug coverage plan, which has the potential to save Canadians up to \$5 billion per year on prescription drug costs. The discussion will feature experts, health professionals and patient advocates. Facilitated by Avi Lewis, former host of CBC's current-affairs programs *CounterSpin* and *On the Map*. Co-sponsored by the BC Health Coalition, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers – Victoria Local 850, the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health, Kairos Victoria and the Victoria Labour Council.

For more information, go to <https://canadians.org/pharmacare-now/>.

Brain Art Showcase

Wednesday, June 14, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, outside of Michelle Pujol Room, Student Union Building, University of Victoria

The Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health has five research clusters (Brain Health, Digital Health, Health Behaviours and Interventions, Populations and Health, and Health Services and Systems) which reflect the various research interests of its affiliates. Researchers in the Brain Health Cluster focus on brain structures, the assessment and monitoring of brain functioning, and the impact of various interventions on cognitive performance. Recently, the Brain Health Cluster hosted a Brain Art competition. The goals of the event were to: a) bridge science and art; and b) encourage creative approaches to visualizing what brain health means. Faculty, post-doctoral fellows, undergraduate and graduate students, research assistants and staff from all departments at UVic were invited to submit an entry which was: a) focused on the brain; b) inspired by research; and c) original. Submissions could focus on the whole brain, a favourite brain structure, brain cells, mental health, brain changes over the lifespan, or the aging brain. Submissions from the 2023 Brain Art Competition will be on display outside of the Michelle Pujol Room in the Student Union Building on **June 14, 2023**. You are invited to attend the showcase in person and vote for your favourite entry.

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Upcoming Events (Cont'd)

In Search of the Holy Grail of Seismology: The Discovery of a Deterministic Earthquake Precursor

Wednesday, June 14, 6:30 pm, Bob Wright Centre (Room A104)
Admission: \$10.00, FREE for students

During the 1980's, a research team in the United States launched *The Parkfield Earthquake Prediction Experiment* (PEPE), an ambitious experiment that monitored a 30km segment of the San Andreas faultline. When the 2004 Parkfield earthquake struck, there was no apparent precursor. Researchers, including guest speaker **Dr. Kin-Yip Chun**, deployed a new seismic analysis method which re-examined the high-quality data left over from the PEPE. Within a year they unearthed a deterministic earthquake precursor with precision similar to what can be expected from simulated earthquake experiments performed in rock-physics laboratories. This non-technical talk will be based on a research article published in the *Bulletin of Seismological Society of America*, which was co-authored by Dr. Chun.

About the Speaker:

Dr. Kin-Yip Chun, Seismologist
Professor Emeritus of Seismology, Department of Physics, University of Toronto

Registration:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/634247891517>

****This event is hosted by the University of Victoria Retirees Association (UVRA). For any questions, please contact uvra@uvic.ca.**

Exercise as Vascular Medicine

Thursday, June 29, 2023, 1:30 to 2:30 pm, online via Zoom

Professor Daniel Green is a Cardiovascular and Exercise Physiologist at the University of Western Australia. His research provides a platform for the evidence-based use of exercise in the prevention of cardiovascular disease. He will discuss the history of ideas pertaining to our current understanding of cardiovascular circulation and why arteries matter in achieving lifelong health. Additionally, he will discuss challenges associated with detecting and treating vascular dysfunction over the lifespan and will provide solutions for optimal management after early vascular disease detection, summarizing the use of exercise and environmental therapy to improve vascular health.

Link to attend: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82362103268?pwd=b0hCR3NFNWZGc0FpeExueDVHQkJRZz09>

Meeting ID: 823 6210 3268

Passcode: 20230629

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#IALHMoves

with Charles Perin - Ultra-trail running

“It provides a **peaceful** environment far from civilization; it allows one to focus, think, and **meditate in movement**”

Charles Perin is an Assistant Professor in Computer Science and an IALH Research Fellow. Despite a busy schedule that includes teaching, mentoring, research and family responsibilities, Charles still finds the time to schedule training for ultra-trail running.

How did you get started in this activity?

The COVID-19 pandemic made me want to spend time outside. I started running with the goal to run a marathon one day. After 18 months of road running, I decided to try running near Thetis Lake. I realized how wonderful it is to run in the beautiful nature we have around here. I began training for trail races and learning about ultra-trail running. I've now run a 100 mile long race, but not a marathon.

How long have you been doing this activity and what changes have you noticed over time?

Running, particularly on trails, brings many physical and mental benefits. Physically, it offers much more complete exercise than road running as it requires balance, constant adjustment and using different muscle groups based on terrain. Mentally, it provides a peaceful environment far from civilization; it allows one to focus, think, and meditate in movement. Ultra long distance races also challenge the mind as much as the body to accomplish things that would seem impossible.

What helps you to stay motivated to keep doing this activity?

The mental and physical challenge of races, during which one competes against themselves before all. The trail running community as well. In the Greater Victoria area but more broadly on the island and in all of BC, there is a large, welcoming group of people of all ages, body types and abilities that are passionate about the sport.

“ Do not create artificial barriers or doubt your capabilities; people are capable of incredible things. ”

Where is your favourite local place to do (or train for) this activity?

My two favourite training grounds are the Thetis Lake/ Gowlland Tod/Goldstream area, which are close to home, and PKOLS (Mount Douglas Park) which is close to work. Both offer a large variety of trails. While the latter can be busy, the former often results in more wildlife than human encounters.

What challenges do you face trying to maintain or fit this activity into your daily routine?

Running ultra-long distances requires ultra-long training hours. It is a challenge to combine work, family, and running and one has to be creative in their schedule.

How do you overcome this challenge?

I usually plan a long run on Sunday morning, between 5 and 11am, which allows me to still spend time with my family. I also try to squeeze a run around lunchtime while at work, schedule permitting. Running only requires a pair of shoes. I also often run at night, after the kids are asleep. This is actually part of the training as one has to train to run during night time with a headlamp to replicate what happens in 24 hour races.

What advice would you offer to someone who would like to try or is just starting out in this activity?

1. Do not run on roads or in traffic, go enjoy nature.
2. Talk to people around you and get to know the trail running community.
3. Do not create artificial barriers or doubt your capabilities; people are capable of incredible things.
4. Listen to podcasts about the sport.